Status of removal of River-Princess from Condolim Beach

376. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the status of removal of River Princess from Condolim Beach; and

(b) the chances of the ship being completely broken and spoiling the beautiful beach in the next five years?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment & Forests issued directions on 4th May, 2001 under section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, directing M/s Salgaocar Mining Industries Ltd. (SMIL), Goa to defuel the ship, refloat and tow it away to a ship breaking yard and dismantle the same within 30 days. Since these directions were not complied with, the Central Government filed a criminal application in the court of Judicial Magistrate at Panaji under Section 15 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Simultaneously, .under 'the Goa Tourist Places (Protection and Maintenance) Act, 2001' and Rules made thereunder Department of Tourism, Government of Goa initiated action against M/s SMIL. As per the notice dated November 5, 2002, issued by Government of Goa regarding removal of the ship from Condolim Beach, the Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Goa shall decide the matter and issue the final orders, as expeditiously as possible and, in any case, within a period of 60 days from 14.10.2002. Government of Goa is hopeful of getting the grounded vessel removed from the present site before any mishap.

Idol immersion in rivers and ponds

377. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Pollution Control Board proposes to amend the existing Pollution Control Laws, to stop the practice of idol immersion in rivers and ponds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reason therefor; and

(d) the reasons suggested by the Central Pollution Control Board to arrest rising water-pollution in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) The Central Pollution Control Board has not made any proposal to amend the existing pollution control laws to stop the practice of idol immersion in the rivers and ponds. The Central Pollution Control Board has made the following suggestions to the State Pollution Control Boards for preventing water pollution during immersion of idols.

1. The offering like flowers and leaves may be collected in separate containers or in pits for compositing;
2. After immersion, the recyclable articles like jari, clothes, plastics, aluminium foil, wood and bamboo may be taken out of the water bodies. The civic authorities may engage agencies/ persons for doing the job;
3. Areas may be earmarked for immersion and such other activities to prevent indiscriminate disposal and to help retrieval of recoverable materials; and
4. Environment-friendly practices such as use of biodegradable dyes and paints may be encouraged.

Exclusion of tea gardens from forest cover in Assam

378. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which tea gardens are excluded from forest cover in Assam;

(b) the reasons for eviction of peasants from forest land in this State; and

(c) whether there is enough forest cover in the State for ecological purpose?